

**Committee on Education and Labor: Member Day Hearing  
Written Testimony of Rep. Brenda L. Lawrence (MI-14)**

Chairman Scott, Ranking Member Foxx, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding what I consider to be some of the more pressing issues facing our country.

As we continue to overcome the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, investing in our communities will be critically important. To address this issue, I want to talk about two initiatives in particular: investing in our students and strengthening our workforce.

Recently, I introduced HR 2627, the *Pell to Grad Act*, which would increase opportunities for higher education by providing additional financial resources to students working to support themselves and offset astronomical college costs.

This legislation would extend students' lifetime Pell Grant eligibility to 16 semesters and allow students who received a Pell Grant award during their undergraduate education to utilize their remaining Pell Grant eligibility for their graduate degree.

By expanding Pell Grant eligibility, we can reduce the burden and remove the barriers that far too many students in this country face in their pursuit of college degrees.

Additionally, it is essential that we invest in our workforce. President Biden's *American Jobs Plan* highlights the need to retool workers to gain new skills, target workforce development opportunities for underserved communities, and bolster apprenticeships.

As we seek to Build Back Better, we must Build Back Better for Women. Historically, women have been underrepresented in many sectors of our workforce—by investing in women, we can ensure they have the tools they need to succeed in our economy.

Finally, I want to highlight HR 2661, the *Environmental Health Workforce Act*, which would prioritize education and training for existing and new environmental health professionals. Now more than ever, we must recognize the critical role that environmental health workers serve in our communities. This legislation does just that by developing model standards and guidelines for credentialing environmental health workers, while also making them eligible for the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program.

Before closing, I want to commend the Chairman for his leadership during the beginning of the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress. Within the first few months, this body has already passed legislation to reauthorize the *National Apprenticeship Act*, prioritize our workers in the *American Rescue Plan Act*, and protect workers' rights as part of the *Protecting the Right to Organize Act*.

I look forward to working with you to advance legislation that benefits Americans across the country. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today, and I yield back.